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SUBJECT: NIGER: Voter Registration Update

¶1. On January 21, amid civil society concerns, the president of the National Commission to Pilot the Revision of the Voter Register (known by its French acronym CNPRFE) briefed the National Council for Political Dialogue (CNDP) made up of all political parties on the progress made in the preparation of the new voter register. Political party representatives expressed some concerns regarding the CNPRFE's lack of resources, the delay observed in the voter register's completion and posting of lists. They further urged for the installation of the Independent National Electoral Commission (CENI) even before the completion of the CNPRFE's work.

¶2. The CNPRFE President stated that his team had already processed the results of the voter registration for four of the most populated regions (Dosso, Tahoua, Tillabery, and Maradi) and was completing final work on the other regions. Government of Niger (GON) Prime Minister Seyni Oumarou, who chaired the CNDP meeting, assured that all steps are being taken to ensure that all concerns are addressed. In a previous statement, the Prime Minister said that "the government has inscribed 15 billion CFA [\$ 30 million] for the organization of elections which we understand will take place within the legal deadlines."

¶3. On January 29, GON Minister of Interior, Public Security and Decentralization Albade Adouba visited the CNPRFE offices to inquire about the councils' working conditions and the progress of its work, and to encourage the team in its efforts. The minister indicated his visit was not intended as government interference, that it was mere monitoring of the state of affairs that fall within the Ministry of Interior's purview. He emphasized that the GON wants to assert its sovereignty by covering all the costs relating to voter registration and elections. He stated that Niger is an exception in the region where one finds that the voter registration and electoral commissions are independent.

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